

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEWSWEEK COMMENTARY, AUGUST 4 ISSUE,
TITLED "CAPITULATION AT HELSINKI" BY GEORGE W. BALL.

2. AS EVERY SCHOOLBOY SHOULD KNOW, BUT TOO FEW DO, BEFORE
CATHERINE THE GREAT BARGED DOWN THE DNEPER, PRINCE
POTEMKIN DOTTED THE RIVERBANK WITH TEMPORARY VILLAGES
TO IMPRESS THE FOREIGN ENVOYS IN HER ENTOURAGE WITH THE
POWER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF MOTHER RUSSIA.

3. IN MANY WAYS THE APOLLO-SOYUZ SPACE SPECTACULAR WAS
QUITE AS DECEPTIVE, BUT THIS TIME AMERICA PLAYED THE
POTEMKIN ROLE. THOUGH WE BILLED THE PROJECT AS A JOINT
ENTERPRISE, THE APOLLO MANAGED THE RENDEZVOUS, SOUGHT,
FOUND, HOMED IN ON THE SOYUZ AND KEPT THE TWO SPACECRAFT
ON COURSE, WHILE AMERICAN VHF RADIO EQUIPMENT WAS USED
ABOARD BOTH SHIPS. YET, THOUGH OUR TECHNOLOGY WAS
INDISPENSABLE, WE CONSPIRED TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT
THE TWO NATIONS ARE EQUALLY ADVANCED. THEN, BY A
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SYMBOLIC HANDSHAKE, WE MADE IT APPEAR THAT THE SOVIETS
ARE OUR FRIENDLY PARTNERS FOR THE GOOD OF HUMANKIND.

4. ALL THIS WAS DONE IN THE NAME OF "DETENTE," WHICH

HAS BECOME MORE AN OBSESSION THAN A POLICY. OF COURSE, THE PRESIDENT CANNOT TAKE TIME TO SEE ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN, WHO SPEAKS AWKWARD TRUTHS ABOUT THE SOVIETS; HE MUST FLY TO HELSINKI TO EMBRACE BREZHNEV AND CELEBRATE THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE. AND WHAT A HEART-WARMING OCCASION FOR THE SOVIET LEADERS WHO HAVE PEDDLED THAT CONFERENCE FOR TWO DECADES; TO HAVE STATESMEN FROM 35 COUNTRIES DRINKING CHAMPAGNE TO THE CONFERENCE'S ACHIEVEMENTS BEFORE THE EYES OF WORLD TELEVISION IS A TRIUMPH FOR BREZHNEV AND A DEFEAT FOR THE WEST.

5. FOR, WHAT DO THE CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS REALLY MEAN?

6. FIRST, THE WEST SOLEMNLY CONCEDES THAT THE BOUNDARIES ESTABLISHED WITH THE RED ARMY'S HELP ARE "INVIOABLE"--OR, IN OTHER WORDS, THAT THE SOVIETS' EASTERN EUROPEAN EMPIRE IS NEVER TO BE CHALLENGED. THIS, TO THE SOVIETS, IS THE EQUIVALENT OF THE WORLD WAR II PEACE TREATY WE VOWED WE WOULD NEVER SIGN SO LONG AS EUROPE REMAINED DIVIDED.

7. SECOND, BY SPONSORING THE CONFERENCE, THE SOVIETS WILL GAIN FURTHER CLAIM TO A STATUS EQUAL TO THE UNITED STATES.

8. THIRD, THE SUMMIT CONVIVIALITY WILL ACCOMPLISH THE PRIME PURPOSE FOR WHICH MOSCOW CONCEIVED IT; IT WILL REINFORCE THE WISHFUL FANTASIES OF MANY EUROPEANS THAT SINCE THE SOVIETS ARE APPARENTLY SO PEACE-LOVING THE WEST CAN RELAX ITS GUARD, EUROPE NEED NOT UNIFY, AND CLOSE BONDS WITH AMERICA ARE NO LONGER NECESSARY.

9. ALTHOUGH MOSCOW THUS GAINS RICH BENEFITS, THE WEST'S HARVEST FROM THE CONFERENCE IS MEAGER. THE DECLARATION CONTAINS THE SAME LANGUAGE ABOUT REFRAINING FROM THE USE OF FORCE AND RESPECTING SOVEREIGNTY THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SOVIETS EMPLOYED JUST BEFORE THE RED ARMY OCCUPIED PRAGUE. THOUGH THERE ARE HIGHLY TECHNICAL PROVISIONS FOR PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF MILITARY MANEUVERS, THE RUSSIANS ARE UNLIKELY TO TELL US ANYTHING WE COULD NOT ASCERTAIN BY OUR HIGH-DEFINITION SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY. WHAT THE OPTIMISTS EMPHASIZE ARE PROMISES TO MAKE IT EASIER TO UNITE FAMILIES, FACILITATE FAMILY VISITS AND MARRIAGES BETWEEN CITIZENS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, LET MORE NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATE, AND SO ON. UNHAPPILY, THOSE COMMITMENTS ARE IN SUCH GENERAL TERMS AS TO

PORTEND ONLY MINUSCULE HOLES IN THE IRON CURTAIN.

10. BY CONTRAST, THE DIVIDENDS FOR BREZHNEV ARE NOT LIMITED TO A GLOBAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE SOVIET POSITION; FOR HIM, THE CONFERENCE AND THE SUMMIT CEREMONIALS ARE MERELY ANOTHER--BUT INDISPENSABLE--EPISODE IN A WELL-CONCEIVED SCENARIO WHICH HAS INCLUDED WILLY BRANDT,S OSTPOLITIK AND WILL END WITH THE TWENTY-FIFTH COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS NEXT FEBRUARY IN MOSCOW. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF HIS TRIUMPH AT HELSINKI, BREZHNEV CAN THEN RETIRE WITH THUNDEROUS ACCLAMATION, LEAVING COMMAND OF THE PARTY STRUCTURE GREATLY STRENGTHENED--AND THEREAFTER THE SOVIET LINE MAY SUBSTANTIALLY HARDEN.

11. BUT HOW CAN WE RECONCILE LEGITIMIZING THE SOVIETS' STOLEN EMPIRE WITH OUR WESTERN IDEALS? PRACTITIONERS OF REALPOLITIK--INCLUDING KISSINGER--APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT, SINCE THE WEST BOWED TO THE REALITY OF THE BREZHNEV DOCTRINE BY FAILING TO INTERFERE WHEN SOVIET TANKS ROLLED INTO BUDAPEST AND PRAGUE, WE LOSE LITTLE BY FORMALLY RECOGNIZING THAT REALITY. YET, SHOULD NOT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY DISPLAY AT LEAST A COLOR OF MORALITY? IT IS ONE THING TO REFRAIN FROM STARTING WORLD WAR III OVER PRAGUE; IT IS QUITE ANOTHER TO DRINK TOASTS TO THE DIVISION OF EUROPE AND IMPLICITLY SANCTIFY WITH BANAL PHRASES GERMANY'S CONTINUED AMPUTATION. SHOULD WE NOT, AT LEAST, INSIST ON THE EVIL NATURE OF THE BERLIN WALL--THAT IT IS NOT A FORTIFICATION TO KEEP INVADERS OUT; IT IS A CAGE THE RUSSIANS BUILT TO IMPRISON PEOPLES WHO WOULD OPT FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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FREEDOM?

12. NOR IS IT ENOUGH TO ANSWER--AS SOME BUREAUCRATS DO--THAT THOUGH WE NEVER LIKED THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE WE WENT ALONG MERELY BECAUSE SOME EUROPEANS ORIGINALLY FAVORED IT. WHERE IS AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IF WE NO LONGER EVEN TRY TO GIVE DIRECTION TO A COMBINED WESTERN EFFORT?

13. HOW CAN ANYONE JUSTIFY OUR SOLEMNLY AGREEING NEVER TO CHALLENGE THE SOVIET SYSTEM IN EASTERN EUROPE JUST WHEN A KREMLIN-DIRECTED COMMUNIST PARTY IN LISBON IS BLATANTLY TRYING TO ADD PRORTUGAL TO THAT SOVIET SYSTEM? AND WHY ARE WE CONNIVING TO BUILD UP THE SOVIET UNION IN WORLD OPINION JUST WHEN THE SOVIETS ARE CRACKING DOWN WITH RENEWED VIGOR ON DISSENTERS?

14. EVEN HAD WE NOT BLOCKED THE CONFERENCE, WE MIGHT STILL HAVE EXPLOITED ITS DIPLOMATIC LEVERAGE. WE MIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE CONDITIONED OUR PARTICIPATION ON SOVIET COOPERATION IN SEEKING A FULL SOLUTION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AT A MOMENT WHEN THERE ARE MODERATE

LEADERS IN ALL RELEVANT CAPITALS. INSTEAD, WHILE
RUSSIA POURS ARMS INTO SYRIA, WE CONCENTRATE BRAVURA
DIPLOMACY ON A PARTIAL SINAI WITHDRAWAL THAT BUYS TIME
WHEN DELAY IS THE ENEMY OF PEACE. BY LEAVING
UNTOUCHED THE FESTERING PROBLEMS OF PALESTINE, THE
GOLAN HEIGHTS AND JERUSALEM, WE ARE LAYING THE GROUND-
WORK FOR LATER CATASTROPHE, AFTER OIL WEALTH HAS
EQUIPPED ARAB ARMIES WITH OVERWHELMING MILITARY POWER.
AT THE VERY LEAST, MIGHT WE NOT HAVE GOTTEN THE SOVIETS
TO AGREE THAT THEY WOULD ACTIVELY JOIN TO BLOCK THE
EXPULSION OF ISRAEL FROM THE UNITED NATIONS?

15. IT IS BAD ENOUGH FOR AMERICA TO ACQUIESCE IN A
ONE-SIDED AGREEMENT IN HELSINKI; IT IS TRAGIC TO FORGO
THE DIPLOMATIC LEVERAGE THAT MIGHT HELP RESOLVE THE
MOST DANGEROUS CONFLICT SINCE WORLD WAR II. INGERSOLL

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